

Application Serial Number 10/556,447
Response to Office Action
Dated

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REMARKS / DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-9 are pending. Claim 1 is independent. Unless indicated to the contrary, amendments to the claims are made for non-statutory reasons to replace European phraseology.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obviousness in view *Schott, et al.* (U.S. Patent 2,833,062) and *Bain, Jr., et al.* (U.S. Patent 4,749,755). For at least the reasons set forth herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentable over the applied art.

Claim 1 is drawn to an iron, and features:

"...vent means (25) comprises a storage chamber (26) for receiving an excess of liquid (5) from the cartridge (4) passing through said vent hole (28), said storage chamber further comprising:

a tube having a diameter D_t and a vent hole having a diameter D_a wherein D_t is greater than D_a ."

As noted in the filed application, the benefit of the structure of the storage chamber as featured in claim 1 is described. In particular, the storage chamber may be shaped as a round tube or may have alternative shapes, such as a square shape. In a preferred embodiment, the storage chamber has the shape of a tube 30 wherein the diameter D_a of the vent hole 28 is between 0.4 mm and 1.2 mm, the inner diameter D_t of the tube 30 is between 2.5 mm and 5.5 mm, and the length L of the tube 30 is at least 25 mm. With these dimensions spilling of liquid 5 is prevented on the one hand while on the other hand clogging of the vent hole 28 will not occur. If the liquid level 31 in the cartridge 4 is above the vent hole 28, the static pressure pushes some liquid through the vent hole 28 into the storage chamber 26. This causes an underpressure in the cartridge until a pressure balance is reached. Only a small amount of liquid passes through the vent

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hole 28 and enters the storage chamber 26. Withdrawing liquid from the cartridge during operation causes an increase in the underpressure in the cartridge, so that air from the outside and any excess liquid in the storage chamber 26 are sucked into the cartridge 4 through the vent hole 28. It will be clear that, when the iron is put in its heel position as shown in FIG. 2, no liquid will leak from the storage chamber either.

Thus, beneficially, spilling and clogging are prevented.

By contrast, the vent tube 76 of *Schott, et al.* (relied upon for the storage chamber) is not disclosed as being of different diameters. The reference to *Bain, Jr., et al.* fails to cure this defect.

Accordingly, and for at least the reasons set forth above, claim 1 is patentable over the applied art. Moreover, claims 2-9, which depend from claim 1 are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, applicant(s) respectfully request(s) that the Examiner withdraw the objection(s) and/or rejection(s) of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application in condition for allowance.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account Number 50-0238 for any additional fees, including, but not limited to, the fees under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. §1.17.

If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted on behalf of:
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